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UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL RESEARCH IN EDUCATION TRAINING PROJECT (JANUARY 1-DECEMBER 31, 1967).

Grinnel Coll., Iowa.

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A 1-year program was aimed at training 9 undergraduate students in techniques of social research and statistics as they apply to the field of education. During the second semester of their junior year trainees took a 4-credit-hour course in methods of social research and participated in a 2-credit project involving lectures, conferences, field trips, and group and independent research design projects. They drew a random sample of residents in a school district and prepared a schedule of factual and attitudinal questions to be administered during the summer. In the first semester of their junior year they took a 4-credit-hour seminar in the sociology of education with guest lectures, field trips, and telelectures as supplements. The paralleled 2-credit projects consisted of working with the previously gathered data doing coding, card punching and sorting, and statistical analysis. The training aspect of the program is considered successful, and the objective of motivating trainees to enter the field of educational research may prove to be also: 8 of the 9 plan to attend graduate school, 6 in either sociology or education. The local objective to gather and make available to the community information on attitudes toward local educational issues may yet be realized. Major difficulties were organizational, stemming from coordination with the sponsoring agency. (JS).

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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FINAL REPORT

Project No. 6 - 2443-24

Grant No. OEG-3-6-062443-1397

UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL RESEARCH IN EDUCATION
TRAINING PROJECT

February 20, 1968

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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Office of Education
Bureau of Research

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Final Report
Project No. 6 - 2443
Grant No. OEG-3-6-062443-1397

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH TRAINING PROJECT

John H. Burma
Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa
February 20, 1968

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
Bureau of Research

Introduction

This was a program aimed at training undergraduate students in the techniques of social research, as those techniques may be used in the field of education. The program extended from January 1, 1967 to December 31, 1967, and involved nine trainees during the second semester of their junior year and the first semester of their senior year. Objectives of the program were to use regular classroom procedures to train students in the methods and techniques of social research and statistics, and then to provide concrete use of these methods and techniques through independent projects during the school year and for two months during the summer.

Description of the Program

During the first semester of the training period, the trainees participated with a few other students in a four credit course in the methods of social research, taught by Mr. Ben Nefzger, co-director of the project. This course met for three hours a week plus a three hour laboratory. At the same time they participated in a two credit independent project in which they undertook research as a total group, in small groups, and individually. These projects were under the sponsorship of Mr. John Burma, Mr. Ben Nefzger, and other colleagues. Part of the independent project consisted of planning for the research of the ensuing summer. There were numerous conferences with and lectures by local school officials, and field trips to school areas.

The trainees drew a random sample of the residents in the Grinnell-Newberg School District, prepared a schedule of factual and attitudinal questions, and during the summer administered the schedule to the sample. The schedules were coded and the data punched by the trainees on I.B.M. cards. A counter-sorter was used to secure totals and calculators were used for preliminary statistical calculations. The summer program was under the direction of Mr. Burma.

In the second semester the students took a four credit senior seminar in the sociology of education, with guest lecturers, field trips, and telelecturers as supplements. At the same time the trainees again were enrolled in two credit independent projects in which they engaged in further statistical analysis of the previously gathered data, as well as other projects, under the sponsorship of Mr. Burma and Mr. Nefzger.

It originally was proposed that this be the first portion of a five year program, but the lack of funds in the Office of Education required the premature closing out of the project.

Evaluation of the Program

1. Appraisal of specific aspects of the Educational Research Training Program.

- a. Objectives. The chief objective of the program was to train undergraduates in social research in education. This was done, and done well. A second objective was to motivate the trainees to enter the field of education. At present it appears eight of the nine will attend graduate school, six in either education or sociology.
- b. Content. Major topics in the course in social research included the relationship of theory and research, research design, sampling and probability, data collection techniques, questionnaire design, interviewing techniques, data processing and analysis, introduction to statistical concepts, and report writing.
- c. Staff. John H. Burma, director, part time; Ben Nefzger, associate director, part time. Mr. Burma taught one course, one seminar, supervised the summer session, and supervised about 75% of the independent projects. Mr. Nefzger taught one course, supervised about 25% of the independent projects and did considerable of the routine work. Marion Vanfossen taught one course. Katherine Wallace, Ben Davis, William Weeks, Dennis Murphy, Thomas Charlton, Owen Rickard, various members of the public school administration, and various persons in the Computer Center at Grinnell and the one at Iowa City acted as consultants, lecturers, or in other ways assisted in the program. All persons named were very cooperative, but we were sorry that there were no really professional researchers available for consultation and lectures. The original plan was a five year program with Mr. Burma to be director the first year with Mr. Nefzger as associate; the next year these positions were to be reversed, but our funds were not renewed. Mr. Nefzger did not receive a stipend for his work, but he should have.
- d. Trainees. The quality was excellent, and the number all who could be handled in independent work. No changes would be made, unless it would be to have one or two less. This would be solely because of independent work loads on the staff, not because of classes, which were by no means large and all of which were permitted to include non-trainees.
- e. Organization. Working from January 1 to December 31 was fine in every way except that most other programs ran for an academic year, and this caused us a very considerable amount of financial difficulty with the accounting personnel in Washington. Fortunately, the College extended the project "credit" and payed

our bills while we were waiting for HEW red tape to get unsnarled. However, the College was three months late getting our laboratory set up and equipped, so our program has been hampered by institutional inflexibility both in Washington and Grinnell.

- f. Budget. The budget size was adequate. The fact that the details of the budget could be worked out face-to-face with the College Treasurer was a really significant assistance, and a vast improvement over the programs where the items in the budget are handled in Washington. I am very sorry that this practice is not to be continued.

2. The most unique feature, I judge to be the actual practice during the summer in interviewing, coding, card punching, and the like. The experiences of the trainees in interviewing were invaluable and could have been gained in no other fashion. Unfortunately the program had not been planned for only one year, so much which should have been done in later years will have to be foregone, and the single year in many ways had to be a pilot program. The eight credit hours in independent (but supervised) research probably is unusually high. Probably six hours would be sufficient. The small number of trainees meant virtually tutorial work at times.

3. Our chief difficulties were organizational: we were notified of cancellation early in the program, which decreased our impetus, caused us to have to change some aspects of the project, and worked a financial hardship on the associate director. We also had considerable difficulty in actually receiving the allocated funds from HEW in Washington. We had no guidance, advice, or evaluation from headquarters. Ungrateful as it sounds, most of our headaches which were not self - or situation - generated were in relationships (or lack of them) with USOE. There were no problems with trainees or staff. We also had serious trouble with our computer work, because Grinnell College is a satellite of the University of Iowa Computer Center, which underwent a very disruptive change in computers right when we needed the computer work most. Our own computer center underwent a change in directors, too, which was a problem. We did not budget nearly enough money for computer charges, not realizing how much trouble we would have. Six of the nine trainees had to take incompletes in December in their independent projects because of these computer programming difficulties. The work was all completed, except what was to be done on the computer. I believe this problem is now at an end, and the reports will be completed soon. The trainees had completed their work well and on time, and their training had been completed. What had not been completed was material the director wished for research purposes and for possible publication, and this should all be forthcoming quickly.

4. The program was a mixed success. That is, it had a number of objectives, some of which were met better than others. The trainees did get a far more rigorous and extensive training in social research and in independent research than they could otherwise have achieved. This was the major objective, and in this, the project was very successful. Another objective was to get students into a "flow" whose end product would be professionals doing social research in areas of particular interest to education. This objective may or may not be successful, as time will tell. The majority are going into graduate school either in sociology or education, so the chances are good that this objective will be met also. A minor, purely local, objective was to gather and make available to the local community information on attitudes toward certain local educational issues. This has not yet been done, but will come before the coming semester closes. For example, one student wished to make a relatively simple evaluation of the Headstart program. This has required "clearance" from local authorities, the Kansas City office, and the Washington office, and after two months this clearance still has not been received.

Again it is unfortunate that the program cannot continue, for many minor first-time-out errors could be corrected, and an even more successful project could have been conducted next time.

5. As for recommendations for improving the USOE administration of the program, my answers are subject to bias because our program was one of the ones cut out. I feel strongly that there should have been an evaluation of the quality of work proposed or being done, and the programs retained or dropped on that basis, not on cost. Second, there was never any information circulated as to what other projects were doing successfully or unsuccessfully; no interchange of ideas, no meeting of directors; we, at least, felt extremely isolated. Third, we have had and still are having difficulty in actually receiving the funds allotted to us, and we have spent considerable of the project's funds on telephone calls to Washington, seemingly always to a different and uninformed person, trying unsuccessfully to get it straightened out. Quite possibly USOE administrators often feel the same frustration as we. The policy of permitting the local project's internal budget to be supervised by the College treasurer was a highly desirable and successful innovation.

Program Reports

1. Publicity. The program was announced by word of mouth, personally, to all eligible sociology majors. It was announced to all faculty and all freshman, sophomore, and junior students by mail. This was done in May and in September. No further announcements were made because we secured our full quota of superior applicants, and we "housecleaned" all our local promotional material when we found out we would not be repeating the notices for next year. Only a copy of the application form was retained and this is appended herewith.

2. Application Summary

a. Approximate number of inquiries from prospective trainees (letter or conversation)	<u>18</u>
b. Number of completed applications recieved	<u>11</u>
c. Number of first rank applications (Applicants who are well-qualifies whether or not they were offered admission)	<u>10</u>
d. How many applicants were offered admssion	<u>9</u>

3. Trainee Summary

a. Number of trainees initially accepted in program	<u>9</u>
Number of trainees enrolled at the beginning of program	<u>9</u>
Number of trainees who completed program	<u>9</u>
b. Categorization of trainees	
(1) Number of trainees who principally are elementary or secondary public school teachers	<u>0</u>
(2) Number of trainees who are principally local public school administrators	<u>0</u>
(3) Number of trainnes from colleges or universities, junior colleges, research bureaus, etc. (specify) college seniors	<u>9</u>

4. Program Director's Attendance

a. What was the number of instructional days for the program	<u>2 semesters plus 60 days in the summer</u>
b. What was the percent of days the director was present?	<u>98%</u>

5. Financial Summary

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Expended or Committed</u>
a. Trainee Support		
(1) Stipends	\$9900.00	\$9900.00
(2) Dependency Allowance	-	-
(3) Travel	-	-
b. Direct Costs		
(1) Personnel	\$8400.00	\$8109.45
(2) Supplies	1200.00	1000.28
(3) Equipment	-	-
(4) Travel	\$2000.00	\$2000.00
(5) Other (Computer)	300.00	790.27
c. Indirect Costs	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	\$21,800	\$21,800

Application for Acceptance

into ..

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM

Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Home Address _____

_____ Home Phone _____

Name of parent or guardian _____

Grinnell Address _____ Phone _____

Major _____ Class _____ Cum. point aver. _____

Advisor _____

Probable vocational choice _____

Previous work experiences:

Please list any special skills or abilities you might have that would facilitate your work in this research program.

If you have had prior experience with social research or with educational work, please explain.

Do you have a driver's license? _____

Do you have a car available? _____ Winter _____ Summer _____

What courses required or recommended for this program have you completed?

In which courses for the program are you currently registered?

What are your plans (even tentative ones) for after graduation from Grinnell?

If you are considering graduate study, please state the area or areas of work in which you might be interested.

If accepted, do you agree to fulfill the S.R.E. program requirements, including the summer work?

Date _____ Signed _____

Information for Students Concerning
UNDERGRADUATE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

The Sociology and Anthropology Department of Grinnell College has received a grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare from January 1, 1967, to December 31, 1972. This program, under the direction of Professor John H. Burma and Mr. Ben D. Nefzger, will train students in the techniques of social research and give them practical experience in the application of those techniques in gathering sociological-educational data. These data will be of the type needed by educational administrators in making decisions in the course of their regular administrative duties.

The types of topics which might be investigated include: gathering and applying social statistics, the influence of community pressures on administrative decisions, community-school relationships, student maladaptive behavior, community religiosity, readiness for War on Poverty programs or the evaluation of such programs, census and measurement of gifted, handicapped or retarded children, participation in educational testing, adult education, attitudes toward sex and marriage education, drop-outs, vocational education, influence of television, and parent participation.

The nine students selected each year will receive an \$1,100 stipend during the 12-month period. Communities within the project's geographic area include all school districts contiguous to the Grinnell-Newburg district.

The benefits that this program offer undergraduate students include:

- (1) Specific practical experience will be provided in applying the principles and techniques learned in research courses to concrete, useful research in local communities.
- (2) Training undergraduates in the techniques of educational social research can promote interest in professional educational research, for those students uncertain about choosing a vocation.
- (3) For students contemplating graduate work in any of the behavioral sciences, practical experience in a research program greatly increases the chances of their receiving heavy financial aid in graduate school. For students who might choose sociological-educational research as an occupation, H.E.W. offers excellent stipends through the Ph.D.
- (4) An undergraduate student would receive both a total of \$1,100 in stipends and an accumulation of four to eight hours of academic credit in independent projects.

The importance of research programs of this type to the disciplines of Sociology and Education cannot be overemphasized. Both fields have many more job openings than there are people trained in the techniques of educational and social research.

It is anticipated that the students who participate in the program will have completed introductory sociology and introductory psychology by the end of the sophomore year. In addition to one course in statistics, Research and Analysis, and The Community are required for the junior year. During the second semester of the junior year and the first semester for the senior year, the selected students will participate in independent projects and research on topics associated with the goals of the program. The amount of academic credit received during this phase will depend on the number and size of the projects undertaken. Direct research experience would continue in an eight-week summer program. It is probable that a student, during the program, would participate in a minimum of two projects, and probably three. Projects might range in size from one student for one semester to several students for a year and a summer. A Seminar in Educational Problems and Research will be taken the first semester of the senior year.

Students or faculty who would like more details about the program or wish to discuss it further, should see Mr. Burma or Mr. Nefzger at their earliest convenience.